THE TENNESSEE WARBLER

Newsletter of the Tennessee Ornithological Society

December, 2023 Editor, Theresa Graham

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Greetings from Ecuador! My family and I are in Cuenca, Ecuador for several months as part of a Global Environmental Challenges program. We have enjoyed our time here immensely, and we have managed to sneak away from teaching responsibilities to see some birds, including Andean Cock-of-the-rock and Andean Condor. Spectacular birds! Being away from Tennessee for the fall reminds me how much I love this time of year. Shorter days, changing leaves, and brisk mornings signal that fall has arrived. The pulse of fall migrants followed by our winter visitors provides endless opportunities for us birders. I recently read the newsletter for the Memphis chapter (shout out to Margaret Jefferson and the VanNostrand family for your tireless work to produce the newsletter!). Reviewing the bird sightings, upcoming trips, and Christmas Bird Count schedule allows me to look forward to returning to Tennessee.

In October, the Chattanooga chapter hosted the Fall TOS meeting with an excellent speaker and reception. Thank you, Chattanooga and all those who helped make the meeting such a success. **I am happy to announce that Knoxville will host the Spring meeting April 26th – 28th**. Please consider joining us for some spectacular birding (hello, Sharp's Ridge!) and fellowship.

Two important bird conservation bills are coming up for discussion in Congress. To read more about these bills and what you can do to support bird conservation, visit the TOS conservation page (https://tnbirds.org/thing-you-can-do-to-conserve-birds/) and reach out to your Representative and our Senators. Thanks to the Conservation Committee, TOS recently signed a letter in support of the bipartisan Migratory Birds of the Americas Conservation Enhancements Act of 2023, which would increase funding for the Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act (NMBCA). Over the past 20 years, NMBCA has funded over 700 projects in 43 countries with a focus on protecting wintering habitats. I am proud to be part of TOS and am happy to work with fellow members to protect birds and their habitats for future generations.

Enjoy your fall and winter birding!

Warmly,
Michael Collins
President, TOS

TOS Spring Meeting April 26-28, 2024

The TOS Spring Meeting will be held in Knoxville April 26-28, 2024.

We'll have a Friday evening reception at the host hotel, field trips Saturday and Sunday mornings, Board of Directors Meeting Saturday afternoon, and a banquet and plenary speaker on Saturday evening. We will host the banquet and speaker on the grounds of The Ramsay House (https://www.ramseyhouse.org/) in east Knoxville. We will be able to accommodate only 70 people for the dinner and speaker program on Saturday evening, so plan to register early.

Our speaker will be Tiffany Kersten of Nature Ninja Birding Tours. Tiffany is a professional bird guide based in the Rio Grande Valley of Texas. She is a Wildlife Ecologist, certified Interpretive Guide, and long-time environmental educator. She did a Lower 48 States Big Year in 2021, and her presentation will touch on the adventures inherent in such an endeavor with emphasis on a woman's perspective and the special challenges women face chasing birds near and far. Learn more about Tiffany at https://tiffanykersten.blogspot.com/p/contact.html.

The Host hotel will be the Hampton Inn Knoxville-East (7445 Sawyer Lane, Knoxville, 37924, 865-525-3511). The Friday reception will be at the Hampton, and all field trips will leave from there. This is at Exit 398 off of I-40. A room block is being held at the Hampton at a rate of $149/night. Use this link to reserve a room:

https://www.hilton.com/en/attend-my-event/tyseahx-tos-b8a70f51-b196-468f-a542-bdea11d2815f/

There are a number of other hotels available at Exit 398.

Expect field trips to local hotspots including Sharps Ridge and Seven Islands State Birding Park among others.

Instructions on how to register for the meeting will be posted on the TOS website as soon as available.

We hope to see you in Knoxville in April!!

Fall Bird Count Data Due Now

Fall bird count data are due as soon as possible to allow me to get my report to the editor of *The Migrant* in a timely fashion. Besides the actual count data, please be sure to include the following effort data:

1 - Hours and miles by car, foot, and any night-birding

2 - Number of observers and parties

3 - Any feeder watching hours & names

4 - Start and end times for the count

5 - Weather data for the count

6 - Names of all the participants

Compilers: please try to use a bird checklist that is based on somewhat recent taxonomy. This greatly speeds up my job compiling these reports. Our TOS field cards are being updated and should contain the latest taxonomy.

If you do not have a local compiler, you can send the data directly to me at the address/email below.

TOS appreciates your efforts to record and monitor our bird populations and abundance. Thanks for helping us to archive this data for future generations and researchers. It is important.

Ron Hoff • TOS State Count Compiler
166 Chahyga Way • Loudon, TN 37774 • 865-567-9679
webe2brdrs@gmail.com

MARCH 15TH DEADLINE

The deadline date for the April issue of *The Tennessee Warbler* is March 15th. Please submit all articles, announcements, reports and items of interest by this deadline date.

Submit Material To:
Theresa Graham, Editor
PO Box 366, Oakland TN 38060
(901) 489-0795
e-mail: 2graham@bellsouth.net

Guidelines for Tennessee Ornithological Society Conservation and Research Grants

The Tennessee Ornithological Society invites applications for Conservation and Research Grants to support projects that will directly or indirectly help to protect the birds of Tennessee, increase scientific knowledge, or educate others about the importance of Tennessee's birds. A total of $15,000 is available to be awarded for the grants, which may be divided among multiple recipients.

Anyone with a bird-related project, including students, professionals, and individual workers, may compete for a grant. The project may already be in progress at the time of application. Applicants should submit a project proposal using the form that is available on the TOS website (https://tnbirds.org/grants-and-awards/). Needed information includes: name, address, telephone, E-mail address, topic, problem to be addressed, objectives, expected results and significance, project location, beginning and ending dates, estimated field time, estimated total cost of project, itemized budget, funds available from other sources, how grant is to be used, experience of applicant in the project area, willingness of applicant to share results at a statewide TOS meeting, and whether the work is under the guidance of a mentor or is independent.

A letter of recommendation from a mentor or a knowledgeable associate is strongly encouraged. Up to $50 of a grant may be applied toward the costs of attending an appropriate scientific meeting to present results of the project.

Criteria for judging applications include:
— Significance of problem addressed
— Clarity of proposal
— Adequacy of project design
— Adequacy of experience/training
— Adequacy of professional guidance
— Financial need
— Chance for achieving objectives
— Potential benefit to the species/resource
— Potential for advancing career/studies
— Potential for sharing results at a future statewide TOS meeting

The application and letter of recommendation should be emailed (preferably) or mailed to Michael Collins, Department of Biology, Rhodes College, Memphis, TN 38112; collinsm@rhodes.edu; (901) 843-3557. The deadline for receipt of applications is February 1. Applicants will be notified of the Committee's decisions in early March. All grant awards will be announced in *The Tennessee Warbler*.

Respectfully,

Michael Collins

TOS Conservation and Research Funding Committee Chair

WINTER HUMMINGBIRD RESEARCH

Have you ever spotted a hummingbird at your feeder after 1 November or before 15 March? Or a hummingbird that isn't a Ruby-throat during migration season?

Please consider helping Southeastern Avian Research with our 'western winter hummingbird' research by leaving out one hummingbird feeder year-round. Keep it clean, partially filled with fresh nectar and easily viewed.

If you have any questions, need information or get a special hummingbird please reach out to us at routledges@bellsouth.net and put 'western hummer' in the subject line.

GOODBYE COOPER'S HAWK!

Get ready to say farewell to Cooper's Hawk, Anna's Hummingbird, Gambel's Quail, Hammond's Flycatcher, Lewis's Woodpecker, Bewick's Wren, Brewer's Sparrow, Bullock's Oriole and a good many more.

No, these birds are not extinct. Their names are being changed. The governing Council of the American Ornithological Society (AOS) recently announced three important commitments related to English "common names" of birds:

1. The AOS commits to changing all English-language names of birds within its geographic jurisdiction that are named directly after people (eponyms), along with other names deemed offensive and exclusionary, focusing first on those species that occur primarily within the U.S. and Canada.

2. The AOS commits to establishing a new committee to oversee the assignment of all English common names for species within the AOS's jurisdiction; this committee will broaden participation by including a diverse representation of individuals with expertise in the social sciences, communications, ornithology and taxonomy.

3. The AOS commits to actively involving the public in the process of selecting new English names.

The project will begin in earnest next year and initially focus on 70 to 80 bird species that occur primarily in the U.S. and Canada. That's about 6% to 7% of the total species in this geographic region.

Judith Scarl, the Executive Director, and CEO of AOS, said in a statement that there has long been historic bias in how birds have been named, and scientists should work to eliminate that bias. "Exclusionary naming conventions developed in the 1800's clouded by racism and misogyny, don't work for us today, and the time has come for us to transform the process and redirect the focus to the birds, where it belongs."

The elimination of all eponyms makes this a sweeping project. The process, rationale, and opportunity are all explained here:
https://americanornithology.org/about/english-bird-names-project/american-ornithological-society-council-statement-on-english-bird-names/.

Courtesy of the Birding Community E-Bulletin November 2023.

You can access all past E-bulletins on the National Wildlife Refuge Association (NWRA) website:
https://www.refugeassociation.org/birding-community.e.bulletin

CHAPTER NEWS

Since our **BIRDING KINGSPORT** bird club was established, we have hosted Fun Fest bird walks every year in July. This year, we did three walks during the week at local hot spots with 81 attendees. This event provides folks with an opportunity to check us out who may never have known we had a local bird club. We also had people join us who were visiting Kingsport from other states. Fun Fest was founded in 1981 with an original theme of "Community Unity".

In August, we had our annual picnic at the foot of Bays Mountain Park. It was a fun evening with representatives from the park sharing three resident owls with us followed by most of the group dissecting barn owl pellets led by Susan Hubley. At our September meeting, Chuck and Lola Estes presented "Birding the Lower Rio Grande Valley".

We enjoyed fall migration with five local bird walks and a field trip to Seven Islands State Birding Park. In addition, on September 14, we had a social at Bays Mountain Park in Lily Pad Pavilion followed by a private barge ride. We got close to Wood Ducks in a beautiful evening setting on the lake. On September 30, we hosted a bird walk for beginners at Warriors Path State Park.

On October 17, four members presented a birding program to the Kingsport Alliance for Continued Learning (KACL). We had 39 people in attendance. KACL was established in 1993 to provide area adults with opportunities to explore a variety of subjects and to expand their cultural horizons.

For our October monthly meeting, Adrianna Nelson presented "Summer with the Seabirds: Life in the Gulf of Maine". It was a great program and her enthusiasm is evident for the love of birding, research, and conservation.

Nine Birding Kingsport members had a unique opportunity to visit the Harrell farm in Grainger County on a beautiful fall morning. We tallied 31 species, including wonderful looks at Red-headed Woodpeckers, Swamp and Field Sparrows, American Kestrels, and Red-tailed Hawks. A great day to be in the field! We are looking forward to a return trip in the Spring.

Leadership Team

The **J. WALLACE COFFEY CHAPTER (Bristol Bird Club)** has had many fun and productive field trips. The first was to Roan Mt. – getting up to Carter's Gap for high elevation birds, such as the Alder Flycatcher and Red Crossbills. In August there was a field trip to Weir Dam and other South Holston water areas. A special treat for that trip was four beautiful Swallow-tailed Kites on Chinquapin Rd. in Sullivan Co. In September there was the yearly field trip to the Mendota Hawk Watch Festival. The High Country Audubon Society joined us on a field trip to the Shady Valley bogs, led by Adrianna Nelson. There were also field trips to Jacob's Creek Nature Park and Steele Creek Park.

Our annual picnic was held in July at Steele Creek Park. Despite some rain we had a large turnout and a great time.

At the August regular meeting Jennifer Meade gave a very informative presentation on the Mendota Tower Hawk Watch which she has participated in for many years. Also, in August a planning group was formed to revitalize the Mendota Hawk Watch, in Mendota, VA. The leader, Ron Harrington is heading up the effort to keep birders informed of plans for coverage and reporting counts. The final count from the watch was a total of 5,569 raptors for the entire month of September.

We had two events in September. The first was our annual BBC banquet at Addilynn Methodist Church with Cade Campbell giving a wonderful presentation on his trip to Ecuador. The title was "The Appalachian – Andean Connection". The second event was at Larry McDaniel and Janet Brown's "Little Biscuit Mini Farm" for an evening of nighthawks and hot dogs. This is always fun and well attended. Hundreds of Common Nighthawks passed over!

In October our regular meeting presentation was given by Adrianna Nelson who is a very accomplished birder. The title of her talk was "Summer with the Seabirds: Life in the Gulf of Maine" and was very enjoyable.

October 13-14 was the Steele Creek Wildlife Weekend organized by Michelle Sparks who is president of "Friends of Steel Creek Park". There were many activities which included a bird walk, bird banding and many displays set up for hands-on activities for children.

Judy Moose, Secretary

CHAPTER NEWS

After a long hiatus due to COVID and construction, the **KNOXVILLE CHAPTER** has finally been able to hold meetings at our traditional location in the UT Vet School. We are hoping this will lead to greater attendance at meetings as we have yet to get back to pre-COVID numbers. Members of KTOS manned a birding information booth and interacted with the public at the Ijams Hummingbird Festival: A Celebration of Wings held at Ijams Nature Center on August 12. KTOS is collaborating with Ijams Nature Center and Seven Islands State Birding Park to develop a Young Birders Club.

The Fall season was kicked off with a potluck gathering at President Chris Welsh's house to discuss goals and plans for the upcoming year. KTOS members are continuing to plan and make accommodations for the annual Spring TOS meeting to be held in Knoxville, TN April 26-28, 2024. Dr. Todd Freeberg of UT's Departments of Psychology and Ecology and Evolutionary Biology conducted our October program, presenting his team's research on songbird sensitivity to social situations. Some members of KTOS traveled down to Chattanooga for the annual Fall TOS meeting October 13-15. In November, members enjoyed learning about birding Puerto Rico and Cuba from Vice-President Dean Turley.

Field trips thus far this Fall season have included guided bird walks at Rankin Bottoms in Cocke County (leader Chris Welsh), Jim Jones Melton Hill Parcel 65 (Jeremy Dotson), two trips to Kyker Bottoms Refuge in Blount County (Tom Howe), and Gupton Wetlands in Roane County (Mindy Fawver). October 1st KTOS and the Chattanooga chapter of TOS conducted a joint field trip to Seven Islands State Birding Park led by Kirk Huffstater. The joint trip was enjoyed by all, and we hope to plan more similar outings with CTOS and other chapters in the future.

The Knoxville chapter is looking forward to hosting fellow birders from other chapters of TOS from across the state in April 2024!

Submitted by: Secretary Stephanie Mueller and President Chris Welsh

It's been another busy time for our **NASHVILLE CHAPTER**. Our summer hiatus came to an end with our annual 'Fall Flock' Pot-luck celebration at our September meeting.

Our 46th year of Wednesday morning Radnor Lake migration walks began on September 20th with over 100 people attending the 4 walks this season. These walks continue to be an excellent source of outreach and we welcomed visitors not only from out of state, but the UK and Australia this fall. As always, we thank our volunteer leaders – Grant Winter, Cherie Parker, Melinda Welton and Danny Shelton this go round. Without folks like them and other volunteers, there would be no walks. Our Spring Wednesday walks will begin on April 17th and go through May 8th. We invite you to join us.

Our Fall Count took place on September 30th. Many thanks to Barbara Harris and Scott Block for coordinating and compiling the results and for all those who got out and counted that day. Results can be found on our webpage – www.nashvillebirds.org

Quite a few of our members also attended the Fall TOS meeting in Chattanooga. Those who ventured east were not only treated to a wonderful weekend event but most also were able to see the Townsend's Warbler, found by Bruce Dralle just in time for the weekend meeting. A rare and fun treat for all.

Elections for new Officers and Committee Chairs took place at our November meeting. Many thanks to those who agreed to continue to serve, those who have put in their time and retired and to new members who stepped up and volunteered their time and talents. In our ever changing and fast paced busy world we truly need volunteers like these folks, willing to step into different roles, do their jobs with expertise and care, which in turn makes my role as President so much more pleasurable. I look forward to 2 more years leading NTOS with these folks by my side.

Happiest of holidays to everyone.

Until next time,
Happy birding…
Cyndi Routledge, NTOS President

CHAPTER NEWS

The **CHATTANOOGA CHAPTER** hosted TOS's annual Fall Meeting October 13-15.

Forty-nine TOS members registered in advance. The meeting began with a reception and field trip sign-ups on Friday evening at the Fairfield Inn and Suites.

Field trip choices for Saturday and Sunday mornings included eBird hotspot locations and two private locations, Baylor School and Tennessee River Gardens.

The TOS board of directors met in the Old Chapel at Baylor School, Saturday afternoon presentations took place in the adjoining Alumni Chapel and included:

- "Scientific Use of eBird Data" by Luke Thompson, Senior, Baylor School.
- "Osprey Nesting on Reelfoot Lake" by Skylar Lowery, undergraduate student, University of Tennessee at Martin
- "Chattanooga as a Future National Park City" by Scott Martin, Administrator for Chattanooga's Department of Parks & Outdoors.
- "Overview of Chattanooga Audubon" by Dr. David Aborn, Professor, University of Tennessee at Chattanooga

Field Trip Reports:

The Chattanooga Chapter joined the Knoxville Chapter on Saturday, October 1, for a field trip to Seven Islands State Birding Park just outside Knoxville. We identified 49 species, led by Knoxville members Kirk Huffstadtler and Chris Welsh.

Saturday, October 14: Baylor School, with Luke Thompson: We had 14 participants and 57 species on a good morning out in the field. Highlights were a Northern Parula, a pair of cooperative Brown-headed Nuthatches, Black-throated Green, Magnolia, and Tennessee Warblers."

Reflection Riding and Arboretum, with Kent Dubois: "A group of 10 began with a walk to the Blue Heron Wetland Boardwalk which took us to Lookout Creek. We saw and heard a variety of birds there including woodpeckers, flycatchers (Phoebe and Pewee) and warblers. At Gleason Reach we saw woodpeckers, warblers and thrushes, including very good looks at a couple of Swainson's Thrushes - 40 species in all."

Greenway Farm, bird banding with Dr. David Aborn: "10 people participated in the field trip and we caught 3 Carolina Wrens, 2 Red-bellied Woodpeckers, 2 Hooded Warblers, a male Magnolia Warbler, an Ovenbird, a male Northern Flicker, a Tufted Titmouse, and 7 Common Grackles!"

Sunday, October 15: Baylor School, with Luke Thompson: "We had 8 participants and tallied 59 species. The morning started out slowly, but it picked up after an early Purple Finch gave some flight notes from the tree line. Blackburnian, Bay-breasted, Magnolia, Tennessee, Pine, and Yellow-rumped Warblers all gave amazing eye-level views for all participants. A quick stop by the lake yielded four female Green-winged Teal."

Greenway Farm, bird banding with Dr. David Aborn: "6 people participated, but breezy conditions kept capture numbers down; 2 Downy Woodpeckers (both female) and a Gray Catbird."

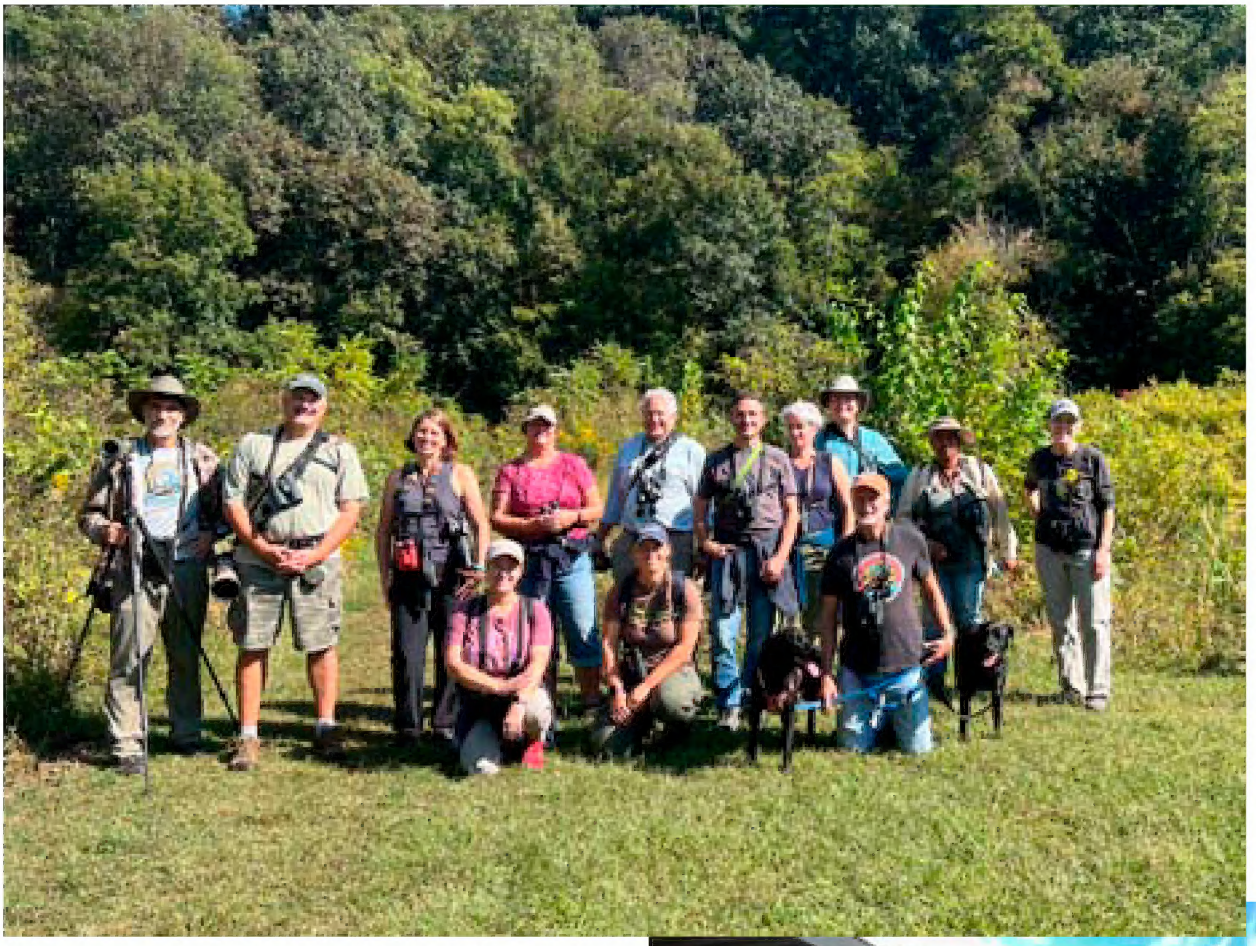
Tennessee River Gardens, with David Stone: "The birding was tough as the wind and cool temperature kept the bugs down so the birds were not feeding very much. Still, we were able to see and/or hear 43 species."

Cravens House, with Kevin Calhoon: Six participants, cold and windy. The only neotropical passerines were a Magnolia Warbler and two Tennessee Warblers. Two avian rarities were discovered in Hamilton County just prior to the weekend; a Hudsonian Godwit at Chester Frost State Park, and a Townsend's Warbler at Point Park.

Barbara Johnson

CHAPTER NEWS

Chattanooga - *Continued from Page 10*



Birdwatchers at Seven Islands State Birding Park

Dr. David Aborn's bird banding session photo by Jayne Trapnell

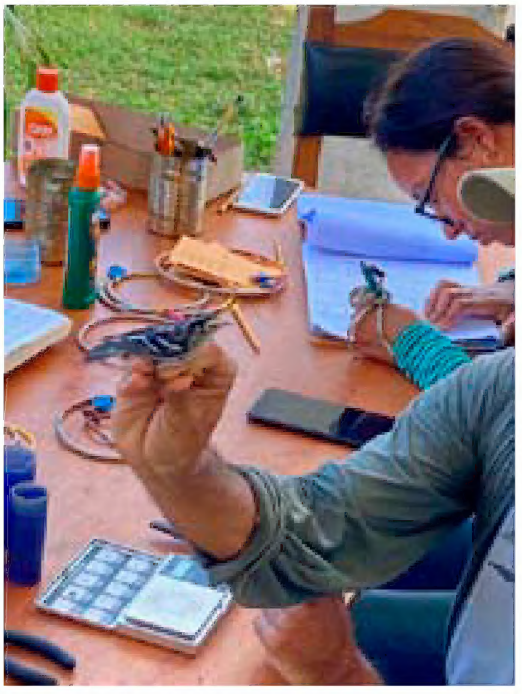
Researchers in Cuba Receive Conservation Grant Money & Supplies

by Cyndi Routledge

Last April several Nashville Chapter members had the pleasure of visiting Cuba and while there met Alejandro Llames, a guide, researcher and bird bander from the Instituto de Ecologia y Sistematica in Havana, Cuba. Alejandro explained to our group that he and other researchers are working hard (10 years to date) to document the bird life there in Cuba in order to help make management decisions aimed at protecting not only endemic species, but also migratory birds that use the island habitat since it is estimated that 66% of our migrants pass through Cuba either coming or going each spring and fall. Research and protection of important habitats there is ever more important, especially as global warming continues to have an impact and tourism in Cuba is on the rise.

Once back in the States, I wrote a conservation grant and presented it to our membership for consideration. It passed unanimously, and $2500 was awarded to the Institute to help purchase much needed supplies and to help with transportation and lodging for researchers to and from the banding station. In addition we also sent digital camera provided by Steve and Pam Lasley and two copies of the newest version of Peter Pyle's banding manual and a laptop were provided by Southeastern Avian Research. Since you cannot just mail anything to Cuba, I contacted my good friends at Gulf Coast Bird Observatory, who had a trip to Cuba scheduled for October. They gladly volunteered to carry the goods and the grant money with them and present it to Alejandro in person. I have included a few pictures from the evening presentation.

Alejandro Llanes explaining to the GCBO group how the bird banding station operates



Instituto de Ecologia y Sistematica volunteer researchers banding a Black and White Warbler

Gulf Coast Bird Observatory Director Martin Hagne and lead biologist Dr. Sue Heath presenting the conservation grant money and equipment to Alejandro Llanes in Cuba